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In A.D. 1599, Shakespeare wrote his play *Julius Caesar*, which contained the now famous quotation “Beware the ides of March” in reference to the political assassination of Caesar. The phrase seems appropriate for the title of a political thriller which debuted at the number two box office position the weekend of its release. “The Ides of March” centers on the fierce campaign between two candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination, and is a perfectly crafted example of the lying, cheating, and backstabbing that goes on behind the smiles and handshakes of politics today.

Ryan Gosling plays “Stephen Meyer”, a creative and enthusiastic Junior Campaign Manager for Mike Morris (George Clooney). However, the Campaign Manager of Morris’ competition, Tom Duffy (Paul Giamatti), pulls a strange move as the movie opens, inviting Meyers to talk to him in person. Upon meeting with Duffy off the record, Meyers is told his opponent’s supposed strategy to Ohio, a key state in the election. At first, Meyers ignores this, believing it is just Duffy trying to get into his head. However, Meyer tells his Senior Campaign Manager, Paul Zara (Philip Seymour Hoffman), only as he watches the strategy succeed, putting Morris’ campaign in jeopardy. This leads to a series of events that will end in Meyers discovering how dirty politics really can get.

The movie, although complicated at times, has a solid plot which will be easy to follow, even for those uninterested in politics. Perfectly twisting through the corridors of politics, scandal, and trust, this movie is an extremely well-crafted story that is sure to evoke emotions in all its viewers. Appropriately timed twists in a somewhat routine story, combined with amazing performances by all actors, especially Gosling, Giamatti, and Clooney, bring a level of tension rarely seen in films today.

However, it’s the somewhat-discreet references to the presidencies of both Clinton and Obama, along with other recognizable parallels to modern-day politics that will draw viewers into the story. In particular, an interesting plot twist about two-thirds of the way through the movie is sure to put the audience on an emotional roller coaster.

Despite small parts of the movie that suffer from dialogue carried on too long, “The Ides of March” more than makes up for it with the stressful moments of both electoral and personal turmoil delivered so well by its impressive cast. When all is accounted for, this is a movie that will be enjoyed by all, regardless of political opinion or lack-thereof.